

U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security  
  
United States  
Coast Guard



Commander  
U. S. Coast Guard  
Sector Miami

100 MacArthur Causeway  
Miami Beach, FL 33139  
Staff symbol: s  
Phone: (305) 535-8725  
Fax: (305) 535-8740

16770/16-0395  
April 15, 2016

Mr. Reza Baluchi  
Via electronic mail: RunwithReza@gmail.com

Dear Mr. Baluchi:

Based on a review of your proposed voyage plan received on April 14, 2016 regarding your transit in the Hydro Pod to Bermuda you are **not authorized to depart**. By this letter, under the authority of 33 U.S.C. § 1223, I hereby order you not to depart because your vessel and the conditions under which you are attempting to complete your voyage to Bermuda is unsafe. Violation of this order may result in criminal penalties of up to 7 years confinement and a \$40,000 fine.

As discussed in August 2015 and again yesterday, I view your current planned voyage without use of an escort/support vessel or an equivalent safety precaution that would allow for self-rescue as unsafe. As referenced in the enclosed August 17, 2015 letter from the District Seven Commander, any future voyages not cleared through me will be terminated as manifestly unsafe. All provisions in my enclosed September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015 letter remain in effect and must be addressed to my satisfaction before any voyage will be approved.

I am most concerned with your statement that "A support boat may put the lives of others in danger..." as this shows a lack of planning and concern for your life as well. In November 2014, you attempted this voyage unsuccessfully and ultimately placed an enormous financial burden on the taxpayers to conduct a rescue. Additionally, it placed Coast Guard personnel at risk.

I encourage you to work with my staff to develop a voyage plan meeting the requirements I have set forth previously. Should you have any further questions or concerns please contact CDR Bradley Clare at 305-535-8709.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. J. Gould".

A. J. GOULD  
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard  
Captain of the Port, Miami

Enclosures

U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security

United States  
Coast Guard



Commander  
United States Coast Guard  
Seventh Coast Guard District

909 S.E. 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue  
Miami, FL 33131  
Staff Symbol: (dl)  
Phone: (305) 415-6950  
Fax: (305) 415-6900

5720

AUG 17 2015

Mr. Reza Baluchi

Via electronic mail: [RunwithReza@gmail.com](mailto:RunwithReza@gmail.com)

Dear Mr. Baluchi:

In regard to your proposed August 22, 2015 voyage from Miami, Florida to Bermuda in a home-made, inflatable conveyance which you termed a "Hydro Pod," I thank you for your proactive outreach to the Coast Guard prior to this endeavor and urge you to clear this voyage through the cognizant Coast Guard Officer in Charge of Marine Inspections (OCMI).

In November 2014, you made your first attempt to run from Miami to Bermuda in your Hydro Pod. A responding Coast Guard unit warned you of the dangers associated with your planned transit to Bermuda, especially with limited means to propel and maneuver the vessel. The Coast Guard expressed its grave concern that the likelihood of deteriorating weather conditions during your voyage would exacerbate the seriousness of the Hydro Pod's limited maneuvering and propulsion capabilities. Indeed, after you activated both SENDS device and PLB, the Hydro Pod was found on its side and rendered disabled.

Pursuant to my authority as Commander, Seventh Coast Guard District, I will terminate any similar future voyages you may attempt in the Hydro Pod that are not cleared through the cognizant Coast Guard OCMI as manifestly unsafe under my authority found in Section 4308 of Title 46 of the United States Code and Title 33 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 177.04. One way to clear this voyage would be to provide a support vessel throughout the duration of your voyage. This order will be enforceable throughout the Seventh Coast Guard District. Any such order will subject you to a maximum fine of \$6,000.00, forfeiture of the conveyance, and imprisonment for up to one year. I have reached this conclusion out of concern for your safety in the event you depart Miami without adequate support and Coast Guard coordination.

Additionally, I draw your attention to the negative impact your activities have had on the Coast Guard's operational capabilities, as well as the financial burden you placed on taxpayers. Despite repeated warnings that the Hydro Pod was not adequate for your intended journey, you persisted until the vessel became inoperable, necessitating the deployment of additional Coast Guard resources at a cost of approximately \$144,000. Your rescue took place in a highly active, highly populated Coast Guard District where resources are always at a premium. I cannot emphasize enough that your use of the Hydro Pod has negatively impacted Coast Guard operations, and unnecessarily expended money, time, and effort. Moreover, you placed Coast Guard personnel at risk when they flew 70 miles offshore in the middle of the night to hoist you from the ocean.

I urge you to clear your proposed August 22, 2015 voyage through the cognizant Officer in Charge of Marine Inspections, which in your case, is likely the Coast Guard Sector Miami office: 305-535-8709. Other voyages presenting similar risks have mitigated safety concerns through the use of support vessels and through Coast Guard coordination. The Coast Guard is, and has been, supportive of arduous individual and team challenges in the maritime environment. However, it is incumbent upon the Coast Guard to ensure these events are conducted in a safe manner.

Should you have questions or concerns, please contact Mr. Christopher Eddy at (305) 415-7151. I thank you in advance for your consideration and cooperation should you undertake any future voyages in the Hydro Pod.

Sincerely,



S. A. BUSCHMAN  
Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard  
Commander, Seventh Coast Guard District

Copy: U.S. Coast Guard Sector Miami (Office of the Sector Commander, Office of the Prevention Department Head)

U.S. Department of  
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Sector Miami

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16770/15-0794  
September 4, 2015

Mr. Reza Baluchi  
Via electronic mail: RunwithReza@gmail.com

Dear Mr. Baluchi:

This letter is to summarize discussions during our meeting on August 21, 2015 regarding your proposed voyage from Florida to Bermuda in your homemade and inflatable conveyance termed "Hydro Pod" and to ensure proper interpretation of the Commander, U.S. Coast Guard Seventh District order dated August 17, 2015.

As discussed during our meeting, you should develop a detailed voyage plan that can be shared with appropriate Search and Rescue resources in the event assistance is needed. At a minimum, the plan should include the following information:

1. Date, time and location of departure.
2. Expected/planned route as well as length of voyage.
3. Expected forecasted weather for the intended voyage, which should include maximum sea state (wind and wave height) and any and all operational limitations you intend to operate within.
4. A complete description of the "Hydro Pod"; size, dimensions, weight and composition of craft (please include photos for our files) and a list of all safety equipment that will be on board.
5. A description and vessel details (name, official number, size, etc) of all support vessel(s) along with a written agreement outlining the support which will be provided.
6. Methods of communication between shore side support (land), the Hydro Pod and the support vessel(s) during the voyage.
7. Name and contact information for any shore side support.

As your intended voyage includes the island of Bermuda you are encouraged to contact the appropriate Bermuda authorities regarding your intended voyage. We will be sharing all information received along with a copy of this letter with them.

I also encourage you to seek out assistance from experienced mariners familiar with your intended voyage. Their knowledge of local weather, currents and suitability of any support vessels will help to ensure completeness and timely approval of your voyage plan. Should you have any question or concerns please contact Mr. Paul Bates at 305-535-8736.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. J. Gould".

A. J. GOULD

Captain, U. S. Coast Guard  
Captain of the Port, Miami